These are our heroes!
Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

To all of those who continue to work to supply us with all that is essential, thank you so much for putting yourselves at risk to keep us safe. This is just a snapshot of the many in town who go to work every day — we couldn’t possibly cover every workplace. We know there are many, many others, especially our health care workers, who deserve the gratitude of this community. We can’t say it often enough — thank you!

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Town handling complaints

Bylaw officers “were swamped” in Niagara-on-the-Lake over the holiday weekend, says Mayor Betty Disero. They were checking out complaints of holiday rentals that were occupied, and “all kinds of people parked along the Niagara Parkway,” probably not from town.

The Town is “moving beyond education,” handing out tickets to people who are not staying home, she says. Interim CAO Sheldon Randall and Coun. Erwin Wiens have noticed there are small gatherings at farms where offshore workers have arrived, making sure they have sufficient food and have the supplies they need.

There are some complaints coming into the Town, about a group of workers shopping, and others regarding the numbers in the vineyards, seemingly working too close together.

Wiens says “by and large, I’ve been very impressed,” with adherence to guidelines, and efforts to ensure the workers are getting what they need in the way of food and supplies.

He says bylaw officers are going at his disposal if he needs them, but most of the calls are un-founded, a result of the public misunderstanding what they’re about.

“Bylaw officers are double-shifting. All of them are working,” he says. Temporary farm workers

Continued on page 5

Niagara Long Term Care declares outbreak

Penny Coles
The Local

Lord Mayor Betty Disero is hoping Niagara Region Public Health will release the number of COVID-19 cases in Niagara-on-the-Lake. She has been working with the office of regional chair Jim Bradley to get those figures, and it was told twice last week the information would be made available.

But by Tuesday, she had heard nothing, and she’s frustrated.

Niagara Region Public Health is, however, releasing names of regional facilities that have an outbreak, and late Tuesday afternoon it reported that three long-term care homes in the region had the virus.

The Niagara Health website was reporting 22 deaths of patients who tested positive for COVID-19 Tuesday, although the virus was not necessarily the cause of death, the website says.

Hirji cites the right to privacy for those infected with the virus, and says with such low numbers in each municipality, they could be identified and stigmatized. He says one of the earliest affected individuals in Niagara was named in the press, with unfortunate consequences and he doesn’t want a repeat of that.

He’s trying to reach a balance between giving members of the public the information they need to protect themselves, while not creating a situation where privacy could be a concern, or the numbers skewed, or “misrepresented” in communities.

For immediate alerts, follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For lack of information regarding individual municipalities from the Region, “it is disappointing,” says Disero.

“I received information from the chair’s office a week ago that the information would be forthcoming. It isn’t happening.”

Some of the numbers that are released are a week old, she added.

Having up-to-date information about what is happening in the community might help stress the need to stay home, she says.

“There are people who are dying, and the numbers of cases are increasing,” says Disero.

“That’s my biggest concern.”

Town Urges Compliance to COVID-19 Preventative Measures and Emergency Orders

As the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s State of Emergency continues, and we enter this next phase of crisis management, we urge residents and businesses to comply with Emergency Measures implemented by the Provincial Government and preventative measures laid out by public health officials.

Practice physical distancing, wash your hands, don’t touch your face, disinfect high touch surfaces and do not leave your home unless it is absolutely necessary. Anyone who has recently travelled must self-isolate for 14 days and non-essential businesses must close.

All outdoor recreational amenities are closed. Green spaces remain open for walk-thru’s, however gatherings of more than five are prohibited. Remember, the virus doesn’t travel, people do.

Community members looking to report a business or individual(s) operating in contravention of Emergency Orders, are asked to contact Niagara-on-the-Lake By-law Enforcement by email (covidcomplaints@notl.com), phone (905-468-3266), or online complaint form at notl.com. After hours complaints or urgent issues can be reported to the Niagara Regional Police Services non-emergency line at 905-688-4111.

To review all Town updates related to COVID-19, read answers to frequently asked questions, and see up-to-date information on the status of Town services, please visit www.notl.com/Covid-19 or call 905-468-3266. Town Staff will continue to assist and serve citizens online and over the phone between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM Monday to Friday.

For immediate alerts, follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
Local design company sewing personal protective equipment

Penny Coles The Local

As we hear daily from health care officials and politicians of the need for personal protective equipment, the shortage of supplies, and the slow progress being made to meet the high demand, a local business owner decided to do something to help.

Simply White Interiors is a NOTL company offering design services that include custom drapery, bedding, and upholstery. When owner Brenda Petrunick had to put work on hold March 22, she realized her business has the talent, materials, and a large Airport Road workshop that could be put to work manufacturing protective items for health care workers.

Three of the company’s seamstresses, sewing in a workshop set up with commercial-grade sewing machines, have turned their skills to producing personal protective equipment, including masks, gowns, and even headbands that provide some relief from the discomfort caused by mask elastics.

Petrunick has also had requests from local retirement homes, and in March 250 more masks from Vineridge Academy. The school is Chinese-owned, with a large number of students from China. They are accustomed to wearing masks outdoors as part of their culture, even when they’re not required.

With a shortage of masks for healthcare workers in Niagara and Ontario, Vineridge Academy has been pitching in to help.

Laura Tail shows the project that she is printing. The face covering is being attached by a group of university students, who designed the shield and hope to donate 10,000 shields to health care workers. (Photo supplied)
Kinship, tolerance, understanding and hope will get us through this

Who are our heroes? There are so very many, too many to name, and to thank.

Doctors and nurses, those looking after seniors in care and seniors at home, and caring for all of those who are sick, whether with COVID-19 or who become exponentially more difficult because of the pressures on the system due to the virus.

They risk their lives and the lives of their family members every time they go to work, in too many cases without their full personal protective equipment. While we’re told daily such equipment is on its way where needed, there are too many individual stories of continuing shortages, putting further stress on our health care workers and their families.

We hear of so many volunteers still doing what they can, including efforts to make protective equipment not only for hospitals but for others who may be near the bottom of the list to receive the gear they need. There are so many great stories of businesses and individuals trying to make stressful situations less so for all of us. To all of them, thank you!

We know there are many essential workers we don’t see, such as the truckers who deliver food and supplies to stores, all our post office and other delivery staff, and those who clean everything from hospitals and long-term care homes to grocery stores and pharmacies.

Again, there are far more than we can name, and many are we will be forgetting, but thank you to all those who work behind the scenes, who we don’t get a chance to thank in person.

Appropriately some of us see our grocery store and convenience store staff on a daily basis, we hear, much more often than we are supposed to venture out. Maybe we could rethink that.

We also hear from our essential workers that while most of the customers they see are cheerful, patient, resilient and grateful, a small number, frustrated by all that is going on around them, take it out on the staff.

One manager told us she hears from people who are angry at her staff members wearing gloves, and others who are angry when other staff are not. They don’t like the constant in passing money and items across the counter because they’re made to feel as if they are presenting some danger, and they’re being told if they don’t like working under the circumstances, they should stay home.

And some are offended because they have to wait longer than they might normally. Really, all the precautions that are being taken protect customers as much as the staff, and if our essential workers become stressed from the bad behaviour of the public, when they are only doing their jobs and trying to keep themselves and us safe, they would be forgiven for deciding to stay home. That would be unfortunate for all of us.

We’re hearing from the Town bylaw offices are receiving loads of complaints, are trying to educate people before issuing fines, and that the complaints most often received are about short-term rental accommodations and other non-essential businesses still operating.

There are situations where short-term rental operators are allowed to make their accommodations available to someone who is self-isolating, but they are supposed to notify the Town so bylaw officers won’t be putting themselves at risk by going to a door of someone who is sick or in quarantine. In the case of other businesses, the provincial legislation can be confusing, requiring business owners and for those requiring service, such as distinishing between lawn maintenance, which is permitted, and landscaping projects, which is not.

In keeping that each and every one of us dealing with different situations, different levels of stress and handling it in different manifestations, we could all do with a reminder to focus on showing kindness, tolerance and understanding to those with whom we come into contact. That alone should make us all heroes! And hopefully, we will receive the same in return.

And while we’re at it, let us focus on hope, that while this may not be over tomorrow, tomorrow can still be a good day.

And one day, it will be over.

Penny Coles The Local

‘Loving small community feel’

I have just finished reading this week’s Local - cover to cover as I always do. I am very thankful to you for publishing many articles with positive upbeat messages during these challenging times, stories about children in our community to help others to ads telling us what local businesses are still open and needing our support.

We just moved to NOTL in December and are really appreciating the ‘small community feel’ - we are regretting that we cannot get to know our immediate neighbours during these times of social distancing, but your newspaper is giving us a sense of the ‘community’ and that we will no doubt really enjoy once things get back to the ‘new normal’ in the meantime, we appreciate learning from your publication about local businesses that we can support and we are enjoying trying to do that. Hopefully all of them will get back into full swing in a few months.

Thank you for keeping up your local news through these difficult times!

Arieth and Rick Staz

Easter at St. Mark’s

An Easter service, without a congregation, was held at St. Mark’s Sunday, and is available on video to watch. Intern Rector Lynne Marchant led the service, with music director James Broune playing the organ and Alain Barres of Music Niagara on the violin. To view the video, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sh3OnleHhAI8&feature=youtu.be.

The NOTL Local acknowledges the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

The trusted voice of our community

P.O. Box 430, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, L0S 1T0

Editor:
Penny Coles
penney@notllocal.com
905-246-3878

Publisher:
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local

Graphic Designer:
Rosie Gowell
composing@notllocal.com

Advertising Sales:
Karen Skeoch
karen@notllocal.com • 905-641-5330

Julia Coles
julia@notllocal.com • 905-934-1040

Helen Arsenault
Local Business Directory, Local Happenings, Classified Sales
notllocal.com

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Easter at St. Mark’s Parish Hall

Continued from page 3

sick. Many of the students have returned home, and those who are left at the school are not going out. They are following strict guidelines, which is permitted, and distinguishing between lawn maintenance, which is permitted, and landscaping projects, which is not.

The students in residence have staff create 24/7, they say, with teachers who are at home, teaching their students online. Vineridge still has a limited number of masks, she says, to be distributed by the school where needed. Winterbottom says.

The need for masks gives Vineridge the opportunity to do something positive in the community, and help out where needed, she says.

The original 10,000 were the N95 masks most valued by front-line workers. The ones available now will be surgical masks, which also are in short supply.

She is hoping local long-term care homes, and health care workers, will reach out if they need masks. She can be reached at 905-329-8936.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake

The trusted voice of our community

Limited mask supply

Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

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It was an Easter most of us will never forget, celebrated as it was with physical distancing in place. But for Connor Crickmore and his family, Easter 2020 will be memorable for other reasons. Following a 24-hour jour-ney from door to door, Connor finally arrived home in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Easter Sunday, after being stranded indifferently in Nepal.

An experienced world trav-eller who has visited more than 90 different countries, Crickmore was in the area to take on the Annapurna Circuit Trek, a 21-day journey through the mountain ranges of central Nepal. While deep into the jour-ney, Canada 2020 began to show itself on the horizon.

As he and his teammates de-scended from Thonung La Pass, their next stop was in Multi-nath. There they discovered their journey would be cut short by the pandemic.

Back in remote Nepal for a few days, they were finally able to arrange a gut-wrenching bus ride through the mountains, arriving in the capital city of Kathmandu on March 28. In the meantime, Nepal had put into place international flights until April 15, meaning Crickmore’s ticket home for April 6 would be useless. With help from his family back home, Crickmore set to work trying to convince the government to put together plans for a repatriation flight to get him and an estimated 1,100 other Canadian citi-zens out of Nepal.

He and other Canadians in his overstuffed Kathmandu hotel were heard by flyers being flown back to Can-ada from other countries, and were concerned Nepal seemed to be flying below the govern-ment’s radar. So, Crickmore and his par-ents, Shari Hartwick and Randy Wiens, got busy by any means they could to get the word out. At the same time, a neighbour’s petition had gathered some 8,000 signatures (at press time, it had over 7,200 signatures).

One of those contacted was Billy Morrison, a NOTL native who is MP Tony Baldinelli’s legislative assistant. “He was passing the news up to the ATV and the CTV story (on my plight), he watched them (other MPs) reading them, and so they were aware,” says Crickmore.

Finally, a sign the govern-ment had taken notice came on April 6, when Global Affairs spokesperson Kristyndra Dodds announced the High Commis-sion to Canada in India was ar-ranging for a special flight out of Nepal to take place sometime last week. With not enough Canadi-an registrants to fill the plane, government officials reached out to Australia and shared the flight in Doha, Qatar with that coun-trys’ stranded citizens.

Crickmore’s long journey home began just before 8 a.m. Saturday morning.

“We waited there, outside, un-til about 11:30,” says Crickmore. “They did some health screen-ings, then we got on the bus to the airport. When we arrived at the airport, it was kind of dead - we were the only ones there. Then they transferred us into a room, which broke all their previous so-cial distancing orders.”

The flight to Doha lasted just over seven hours, where Crick-more and other Canadians were faced with a 16-hour layover. Of Canada’s total stranded citizens, he noted, only one Canadian government continued in Doha.

“They didn’t tell us we were allocated to a £50 to £60 food voucher while we were there, and food in the airport was ex-pensive. We also found out later that we could have booked our tour to Montreal directly through Qatar Airways, which would have been much cheaper,” says Crickmore and many others ended up shelling away the time sleeping on the floor.

At 4:30 p.m. Qatar time, he finally boarded the plane for the 13-hour trip to Montreal.

“Our flight to Montreal was a bigger plane, so I assume we picked up some other Canadians to fill the plane,” he says.

In the end, 46 hours and $3,500 later, he was greeted by his family at Toronto’s Pearson International Airport.

“My mom had to fight back some tears, for sure, he laughs. “I should say that she’s used to the drill, but I don’t think it gets any easier for her. Generally when I travel, it’s for about nine months a year.”

He adds, “a lot of the things I do, I try not to tell her until afterward, so she doesn’t worry about it.”

Though he was able to secure a Canadian law degree or writ-tten the bar exam here. “I could still be flying to work to be sure I wouldn’t be practising,” he explains. “I could still be dealing with legal documents, but more on a per-personal level.”

Once he finds a job that calls on his studies, he definitely a realist when it comes to his fu-ture travels. “Yeah, I’ll be once everyone else, only able to get a couple of weeks off at a time. And to be honest, I think I would just book a trip to the Caribbean to unwind.”

For the 14-day quarantine, Connor is hunkered down alone at a family friend’s sum-mer home on the lake. He says, “It’s great to see my family, and to have them down the road. It’s mostly creature comforts, in the health sense, too.”

Connor Crickmore gets a flight from Nepal to bring him home in time for Easter. He is in isolation for 14 days, glad to be close to friends and family, including his mom, Shari Hartwick. (Photo supplied)
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The Niagara-on-the-Lake

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**Sudoko solution from April 2, 2019**

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A heartfelt thank you to all our staff!  
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Thank you to our customers for your patience and understanding as we face these challenges together.

Phil Leboudec and Tony Hendriks

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